



Family & Caregiver Involvement in Behavioral Health Treatment with Youth

HOW DOES IT HELP?

Treatment is most successful for youth when their families are involved. Family members can:

- “Carry over” information from sessions and continue to help the youth practice and strengthen the skills and communication strategies
- Help a lot when they notice and share their child using their learned skills and communication strategies
- Learn why certain behaviors occur
- Learn to work with their child to resolve difficulties and support healthy relationships
- Help their child feel in control over things that happen to them
- Remind the child that they are also learning new skills

WHY IS CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT IMPORTANT?

Caregivers have a huge role in treatment and are often pivotal in the progress that children make. It is a commitment and the results are worth it. Treatment is not something providers ‘do’ to your child. It is not a quick fix for problem behaviors or a cure for anything. Treatment is a long-term investment in skill development that sets your child and family up for the best quality of life possible. Skills learned in treatment are not just skills for your child. Treatment also provides an opportunity for caregivers to learn new skills. It’s about the family learning new ways to respond to behaviors and supporting behavior plans. This is because caregivers:

- Know their child best
- Are around the child the most and can help them practice their new skills
- Benefit from knowing what their child is learning and accomplishing in treatment
- Help their child feel encouraged with their new skills

WHAT TO EXPECT?

Caregivers should expect treatment providers to:

- Proactively communicate and work directly with them and their child
- Provide information about effective behavior management skills or communication styles
- Demonstrate the skills and help to practice new skills with their child in session, before using them at home
- Plan follow-up sessions to help fine tune learned skills and behaviors

“Children are not problems. They have problems. Focus on helping the child, not fixing the child.”